

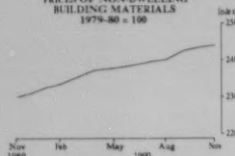
# Statistics Weekly

Thursday, 31 January 1991

## *The week in statistics ...*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small increase in prices of building materials                  | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Export prices steady  | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increase in housing finance                                     | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing in brief ...                                      | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drop in oil prices brings some cost relief<br>for manufacturers | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> This week in brief ...  | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Population in brief ...   | 6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> All the week's releases   | 6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Calendar of key releases up to 12 February                      | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The latest ...  | 7 |
| — key State indicators   | 7 |
| — key national indicators  | 8 |

PRICES OF NON-DWELLING  
BUILDING MATERIALS  
1979-80 = 100



## Small increase in prices of building materials

Prices for building materials used in non-dwelling construction increased by 0.2 per cent in November, while the annual rate of increase of 6.1 per cent continues the relatively low annual increases of recent periods.

The main price increases in November were for ready mixed concrete, sand aggregate and filling, and air conditioning equipment. The main price decreases were for conductors, and lamps and light fittings.

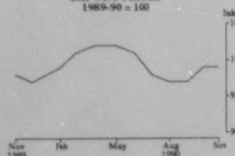
Melbourne and Hobart were the only cities that recorded annual changes significantly below the national average rise of 6.1 per cent.

PRICES OF NON-DWELLING BUILDING MATERIALS  
NOVEMBER 1990  
Percentage change

City	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Sydney	0.2	6.9
Melbourne	0.1	4.5
Brisbane	0.4	6.9
Adelaide	0.6	6.9
Perth	0.5	6.6
Hobart	0.1	4.4
Weighted average of six State capitals	0.2	6.1
Darwin	0.6	5.5
Canberra	0.6	6.7

For further information, order the publication *Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building* (6407.0), or contact Peter Sturgeon on (06) 252 6198.

EXPORT PRICES  
1989-90 = 100



## Export prices steady

Export prices remain unchanged in November 1990 as increases and decreases offset each other.

The main price increases recorded in November were for coal, aluminium and gold. Generally these increases reflected changes in the value of the Australian dollar. They were offset by decreases in the prices of petroleum products, sugar and metal ores.

Export prices increased 1 per cent between November 1989 and November 1990, following the fluctuations shown in the chart at left.

The table below shows the wide divergence in the price changes for the different commodities.

EXPORT PRICES, NOVEMBER 1990  
Percentage change

Commodity	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Live animals and animal products	3.2	-3.0
Vegetable products	0.0	-17.2
Prepared foodstuffs	-3.2	-4.2
Mineral products	-0.9	16.5
Products of chemical or allied industries	2.9	14.9
Wool and cotton fibres	-1.2	-17.0
Gold, diamonds and coin	3.1	-1.0
Base metals	-1.0	-3.9
Machinery and mechanical appliances	-2.0	-1.0
Motor vehicles, aircraft and vessels	0.0	3.1
All exports	0.0	1.0

For further information, order the publication Export Price Index, Australia (6405.0), or contact Peter Cordy on (06) 252 5541.

## Increase in housing finance

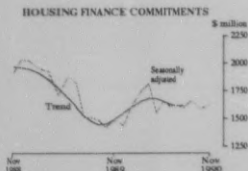
Seasonally adjusted housing finance commitments for November 1990 were \$1,627.1 million, an increase on October 1990 of \$41.5 million (2.6%) and an increase on November 1989 of \$136.3 million (9.1%).

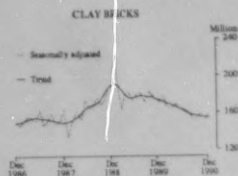
The volatility of the series was again reflected in the latest statistics, with the upward movement (2.6%) in the November data in the seasonally adjusted series reversing the downward movement (4.6%) of October. Trend estimates indicate that the series has stabilised at around \$1,600 million per month.

Within the overall November 1990 figures, banks, which are the major providers of housing finance, recorded a small decrease of \$6.7 million (0.6%), while permanent building societies recorded an increase of \$17.1 million (9.2%) and other lenders an increase of \$31.0 million (14.8%).

HOUSING FINANCE COMMITMENTS, NOVEMBER 1990  
Seasonally adjusted

Type of lender	\$ million	Percentage change from	
		Previous month	Corresponding month of previous year
All banks	1,183.0	-0.6	2.7
Permanent building societies	203.7	9.2	70.3
Other lenders	240.3	14.8	9.3
Total	1,627.1	2.6	9.1





## Manufacturing in brief ...

From this month, *Statistics Weekly* will present the manufacturing production movements in tabular form to provide a general overview of the sector.

Readers are reminded that production of manufacturing commodities can vary quite significantly on a month-to-month basis, even after seasonal adjustment.

The 'previous year' column is a rather more reliable guide, but even it should be treated with some caution unless read in conjunction with the more detailed data presented in each monthly publication.

MANUFACTURING PRODUCTION  
DECEMBER 1990  
Seasonally adjusted  
Percentage change

Product	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Television sets	8.4	33.0
Domestic refrigerators	3.6	30.9
Woven man-made fibre fabric	24.3	9.1
Blooms and slabs	9.1	8.6
Cotton yarn	1.1	7.9
Electricity	0.6	4.4
Beer	-5.2	3.9
Chocolate based confectionery	13.9	3.8
Electric motors	-4.0	-3.3
Wool yarn	1.3	-4.6
Woven wool fabric (including blanketing)	21.8	-4.7
Iron and steel in ingots or other primary forms	-3.8	-5.1
Basic iron, spiegeleisen and sponge iron	-7.1	-5.5
Woven cotton fabric (including towelling)	26.6	-6.0
Portland cement	-1.1	-6.5
Gas available for issue through mains (includes natural gas)	-9.4	-7.2
Clay bricks	4.4	-7.4
Other confectionery	-4.7	-8.7
Textile floor coverings	9.5	-9.0
Domestic clothes washing machines	-19.5	-14.3
Cars and station wagons	-2.0	-17.0
Lawn mowers petrol-rotary type	-10.9	-21.7
Tobacco and cigarettes	-14.9	-22.9
Sulphuric acid; oleum	10.7	-31.2
Motor vehicles for goods and materials	0.9	-34.6

The available trend estimates show no consistent pattern across all manufacturing production. For five of the commodities, the production trend is increasing while ten of the commodities are showing declining trends in production.

For further information, order the publication *Manufacturing Production, Australia, Preliminary (8301.0)*, or contact Kevin Squair on (06) 252 5558.

## Drop in oil prices brings some cost relief for manufacturers

The price indexes of materials used in manufacturing industries fell by 0.3 per cent in November 1990, reversing the large monthly increases recorded in the three preceding months.

The decrease was mainly due to lower prices for imported and domestic crude petroleum, reflecting decreases in world oil prices.

Prices for home produced materials recorded a decrease of 1.1 per cent in November. The decreased prices for domestic crude petroleum were partly offset by increases in prices for most live animals.

The increase for imported materials of 1.4 per cent resulted mainly from increased prices for unassembled motor vehicles and motor vehicle parts and equipment. These were partly offset by lower prices for imported crude petroleum, and because of shipment lags, the full effect of these lower world prices has yet to be fully reflected in the index.

Over the year to November prices of manufacturing materials increased by 13.3 per cent.

The table below shows the impact of these price movements on imported and home produced materials.

PRICES OF MATERIALS USED IN MANUFACTURING  
NOVEMBER 1990  
Percentage change

Source of materials	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Imported	1.4	9.6
Home produced	-1.1	15.4
All manufacturing	-0.3	13.3

For further information, order the publication *Price Indexes of Materials Used in Manufacturing Industries, Australia* (6411.0), or contact Carole Duthie on (06) 252 5348.

## This week in brief ...

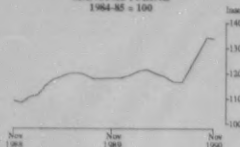
### Industrial disputes

In September 1990, 112 disputes were reported in progress, involving 230,900 employees and the loss of 242,800 working days. By comparison in August 1990 there were 119 disputes in progress with 48,700 employees involved and 56,400 working days lost. In the twelve months ended September 1990 a total of 1,043,900 working days were lost throughout Australia.

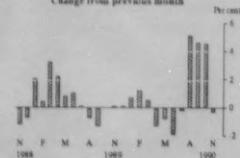
Source: *Industrial Disputes, Australia*, September 1990 (6321.0).

Continued ...

PRICES OF MATERIALS USED IN  
MANUFACTURING  
1984-85 = 100



Change from previous month



## Inquiries

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### Suggestions

Any suggestions for improvement to this publication should be addressed to:

Peter Damcevski  
Editor  
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(06) 252 6101

*Statistics Weekly*  
31 January 1991

## Population in brief ...

At 30 June 1990, the estimated resident population of Australia aged 15 years and over (13,344,500) comprised 4,000,500 never married, 7,800,300 currently married, 837,800 widowed and 705,900 divorced persons.

During 1989-90 the total population aged 15 years and over increased by 226,000 (1.7%).

There were 152,800 (1.8% of the male population) widowers at 30 June 1990. This was less than a quarter of the number of widows at 685,000 (8.0% of the female population). The percentage of widowers was less than 1 per cent at ages under 50 years while the percentage widowed was less than 3 per cent.

*Source: Estimated Resident Population by Marital Status, Age and Sex, Australia, June 1989 and Preliminary June 1990 (3220.0).*

## All the week's releases: 23 to 29 January

### General

*Statistics Weekly*, 24 January 1991 (1318.0; \$4.00)  
*Index of Localities, NSW*, 1990 (1101.1; \$20.00)

### Demography

*Estimated Resident Population by Marital Status, Age and Sex, Aust., June 1989 and Preliminary June 1990 (3220.0; \$11.00)*  
*Deaths, NSW*, 1989 (3307.1; \$11.30) — *final issue*

### Social statistics

*Alcohol and Tobacco Consumption in Darwin*, October 1990 (4302.7; \$12.50) — *new issue*

### National accounts, finance and foreign trade

*Housing Finance for Owner Occupation, Aust.*, November 1990 (5609.0; \$10.00)

### Labour statistics and prices

*Industrial Disputes, Aust.*, September 1990 (6321.0; \$7.00)  
*Export Price Index, Aust.*, November 1990 (6405.0; \$7.50)  
*Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building, Eight Capital Cities*, November 1990 (6407.0; \$10.00)  
*Price Indexes of Materials Used in Manufacturing Industries, Aust.*, November 1990 (6411.0; \$10.00)

### Agriculture

*Agricultural Industries, Financial Statistics, Aust.*, First Preliminary Estimates, 1989-90 (7509.0; \$5.00)  
*Livestock Products — Meat, Qld.*, November 1990 (7204.3; \$4.50)

### Secondary industry and distribution

*Manufacturing Production, Aust.*, December 1990, Preliminary (8301.0; \$10.00)  
*Building Approvals, Vic.*, December 1990 (8731.2; \$8.50)  
*Building Activity, SA*, September Qtr 1990 (8752.4; \$10.00)  
*Building Activity, ACT*, September Qtr 1990 (8752.8; \$10.00)

## Calendar of key releases

Expected releases over the fortnight to 12 February 1991

### January

31

Price Index of Materials Used in House Building, Six State Capital Cities and Canberra, November 1990 (6408.0; \$7.50)

Price Indexes of Articles Produced by Manufacturing Industry, Australia, November 1990 (6412.0; \$10.00)

Building Approvals, Australia, December 1990 (8731.0; \$12.50)

Registrations of New Motor Vehicles, Australia, December 1990, Preliminary (9301.0; \$10.00)

### February

5

Balance of Payments, Australia, December 1990 (5301.0; \$15.00)

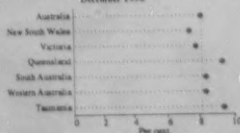
## The latest ...

Changes to key State indicators — consolidated to  
29 January 1991

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
— Percentage change from same period previous year —									
New capital expenditure (June qtr 90)*	-2.3	-8.2	-5.5	-10.6	-19.6	-21.6	n.a.	n.a.	-8.8
Retail turnover (November 90) (trend estimate)	5.6	-3.0	4.6	8.6	1.7	7.4	n.a.	8.4	3.4
New motor vehicle registrations (Nov. 90)†	-5.1	-20.5	-2.3	0.7	-13.0	-10.5	-9.5	-13.2	-9.1
Number of dwelling unit approvals (November 90)	3.8	-9.8	-18.5	0.1	-27.7	-23.5	-36.7	13.3	-10.1
Value of total building work done (Sept. qtr 90)	-3.6	-6.5	26.8	6.0	-12.0	-0.1	5.9	8.9	0.1
Employed persons (December 90)*	0.8	-1.0	-0.9	2.4	0.1	-0.7	-9.0	1.4	0.0
Capital city consumer price index (Sept. qtr 90)	5.8	6.4	5.3	6.3	7.0	5.5	6.0	5.2	6.0
Average weekly earnings (full-time adult ordinary time) (August 90)	5.4	7.0	6.9	7.3	7.9	6.9	6.9	6.8	6.4
Population (June 90)	1.0	1.4	2.6	1.0	2.5	1.2	0.6	2.3	1.5
Room nights in licensed hotels and motels, etc (June qtr 90)	5.4	-0.9	5.7	5.5	-4.1	-1.2	8.5	14.8	3.6

\* Seasonally adjusted except for NT and ACT. † Seasonally adjusted except for Tas., NT and ACT.

### UNEMPLOYMENT RATE Seasonally adjusted December 1990



Key national indicators – consolidated to 29 January 1991

			Latest figure available		Percentage change (a) on		
			Original	Seasonally adjusted	Previous period	Corresponding period last year	
Period							
<b>National production</b>							
Gross domestic product	— current prices	\$m	Sept. qtr 90	93,635	93,427	-0.8	3.6
	— 1984-85 prices	"	"	63,152	63,670	-1.6	-0.7
<b>Industrial activity</b>							
New capital expenditure	— current prices	\$m	Sept. qtr 90	7,078	7,397	6.7	-3.4
	— 1984-85 prices	"	"	5,349	5,600	6.0	-5.7
Expected new capital expenditure		"	Three months to Dec. 90	8,311	n.a.	n.a.	-5.7
Retail turnover	— current prices	"	November 90	7,473	7,128	0.5	2.6
	— 1984-85 prices	"	Sept. qtr 90	14,213	14,858	0.4	0.4
New motor vehicle registrations (e)		no.	November 90	47,498	46,936	-7.8	-9.1
Dwelling unit approvals (e)		"	November 90	11,895	10,998	5.3	-8.1
Value of all building approvals (e)		\$m	"	1,956	1,808	-7.3	-26.5
Value of total building work done	— current prices	"	Sept. qtr 90	7,214	6,951	-3.7	-10.6
	— 1984-85 prices	"	"	4,556	4,390	-4.2	-14.4
Manufacturers' sales		"	Sept. qtr 90	35,796	34,854	1.3	-0.9
Expected manufacturers' sales		"	Three months to Dec. 90	37,757	n.a.	n.a.	0.3
<b>Labour</b>							
Employed persons		'000	December 90	7,941.1	7,852.3	0.3	0.0
Unemployment rate †		%	"	8.1	8.1	-0.1	2.2
Participation rate †		"	"	64.6	63.9	0.1	0.4
Job vacancies		'000	November 90	34.1	35.4	-27.8	-45.6
Average weekly overtime per employee		hours	"	1.3	1.3	-1.9	-16.2
<b>Prices, profits and wages</b>							
Consumer price index	1980-81 = 100.0	Sept. qtr 90	208.9	n.a.	0.7	6.0	
Price index of materials used in manufacturing industries	1984-85 = 100.0	November 90	133.7	n.a.	-0.3	13.3	
Price index of articles produced by manufacturing industry (e)	1988-89 = 100.0	October 90	112.3	n.a.	1.1	6.7	
Company profits before income tax	\$m	Sept. qtr 90	3,449	3,337	-4.2	-23.2	
Average weekly earnings (Full-time adult; ordinary time)	\$	August 90	541.00	n.a.	1.3	6.4	
<b>Interest rates (b) (monthly average)</b>							
90-day bank bills †	% per annum	November 90	12.45	n.a.	-0.35	-5.75	
10-year Treasury bonds †	"	"	12.25	n.a.	-1.10	-0.85	
<b>Balance of payments</b>							
Exports of merchandise	\$m	November 90	4,447	4,408	2.4	11.7	
Imports of merchandise	"	"	4,466	4,265	5.6	-1.6	
Balance on merchandise trade (c)	"	"	-19	143	-46.0	n.a.	
Balance of goods and services (c)	"	"	-273	-185	-277.5	75.2	
Balance on current account (c)	"	"	-1,349	-1,371	-18.8	26.8	
Terms of trade (d)	1984-85 = 100.0	Sept. qtr 90	n.a.	105.3	0.3	-1.8	
<b>Foreign investment</b>							
Net foreign debt	\$m	30 Sept. 90	124,507	n.a.	1.4	7.3	
Net foreign liabilities	"	"	165,572	n.a.	3.3	7.4	
<b>Exchange rates (monthly average)</b>							
US\$	per \$A	November 90	0.7745	n.a.	-3.5	-1.0	
Trade weighted index	May 1970 = 100.0	"	56.2	n.a.	-4.1	-7.6	
<b>Other indicators</b>							
Population (resident at end of qtr)	million	June 90	17.1	n.a.	0.3	1.5	
Overseas visitors	'000	June 90	157	201	5.6	11.0	

(a) Based on seasonally adjusted figures where available. (b) Source: Reserve Bank of Australia. (c) For percentage changes, a minus sign indicates an increase in the deficit, no sign means a decrease in the deficit or an increase in the surplus. (d) The ratio of the price of goods and services for exports to that for imports. (e) Later figures expected to be released Thursday, 31 January 1991.  
 NOTES: † = change is shown in terms of percentage points. n.a. = not available.  
 Figures have been taken from a variety of ABS publications. Copies may be obtained from Information Services (see page 6).  
 Some of the figures shown are preliminary, some final, and some are revisions of previously published figures. Users should check the latest relevant publication or with the ABS Information Services if the status of the statistic is important.

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